

NEWS

From the Office of

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Scenario for Major Earthquake on San Andreas Fault Released

A detailed analysis of the devastation that is possible following the long-awaited "Big One" was released today by the U.S. Geological Survey and California Geological Survey and will be used for a statewide disaster drill in November.

"This frightening, but credible scenario of what could happen when the San Andreas Fault ruptures from the Salton Sea to San Bernardino and beyond is a wake-up call not just for government, but for all residents to be prepared for this inevitable disaster," said San Bernardino County First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, who is also the governor's appointee to the California Seismic Safety Commission.

The scenario is the work of 300 experts, led by the U.S. Geological Survey, the California Geological Survey and Southern California Earthquake Center. When the southern 200-mile segment of the fault ruptures, which it hasn't done for more than 300 years, it could easily generate a magnitude 7.8 temblor, roughly the same magnitude that caused so much destruction in China on May 12. The San Andreas runs through Wrightwood, across the Cajon Pass, and along the northern part of San Bernardino and Highland before heading out into the Coachella Valley.

The scenario envisions 1,800 dead, 50,000 injured and more than \$200 billion in damage, with more than a third of that the result of 1,600 fires ignited because of the quake. Interstate 15 through the Cajon Pass will be sheared, as will Interstate 10 through the San Geronio Pass, along with water lines, pipelines, and communications systems.

"There must be a grassroots effort to have every citizen ready to be on their own for several days and possibly longer," Mitzelfelt said. "Just as we saw a societal shift in behavior with regard to drinking and driving, and seat belt use, disaster preparedness needs to become part of our everyday culture."

The scenario will serve as the basis for November's Golden Guardian statewide disaster exercise and will be run in conjunction with a campaign beginning next month called the Great Southern California ShakeOut, an effort to inform Californians about the need to prepare.

For information on preparedness, residents can go to Supervisor Mitzelfelt's website, www.sbcounty.gov/mitzelfelt, and the earthquake scenario can be viewed at www.usgs.gov or www.conservation.ca.gov/CGS.

